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GOD, MAN AND IMMORTALITY.

A LAYMAN'S VIEW.

BY PETER S. GROSSCUP, JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT
COURT OF APPEALS.

AN article in a recent number of this REVIEW, by the late D. H. Chamberlain, in reconstruction days Governor of South Carolina, entitled "Confessions of a Free Thinker," and the comments thereon by Professor Goldwin Smith, have prompted this article.

Mr. Chamberlain's article is not a compact or scientific statement of any theory or belief; it is rather a statement of the picked-up thoughts of a bystander who has allied himself to a theory or belief; and Professor Goldwin Smith's article is only a running commentary in the way of reply. The subject, from a purely popular standpoint, deserves, it seems to me, a more careful exposition; and, while I am but a layman both in science and theology, the work can be performed, perhaps, as well by a layman as by an expert.

Ex-Governor Chamberlain was one of those men who, attracted to the subject as only a side interest in a busy life, came late in life to believe that the universe is entirely physical; that man is but one of the many physical outbursts of this physical universe; that there are no such things as mind distinguished from matter, spirit distinguished from body—mind and spirit being functions only of matter, as digestion is a function of the stomach; that there is no overruling intelligence, no moral plan, no personal immortality. And could we penetrate the shell of the more or less conventional beliefs of the world, we might find many such men—mental lives that run in their later years in exactly opposite directions to the mental lives of their earlier years; mental lives that run in exactly opposite directions to the mental lives of such men as Kant, Virchow and Bois Raymond,

who, beginning in their views on this subject where Chamberlain left off, themselves left off, in their ripened maturity, in the full conviction that there is a God, a soul-life aside from physical life, and an immortality.

The best popular exposition, perhaps, of the school of thinkers into which Chamberlain drifted, will be found in the books of Ernest Haeckel, Professor in the University of Jena; and his best single book, perhaps, the one entitled "The Riddle of the Universe." I am not competent, of course, to measure argument on this subject with a man of the vast resources of Haeckel; nor would one who was competent have room enough within the space of a magazine article. But I can state, I think, accurately and fully, the thread of his reasoning, and place against it the considerations that make it, to my mind, wholly inconclusive as a demonstration of the theory that man is wholly material—that mind and spirit are nothing but functions of matter.

The most interesting and suggestive link in the chain on which this materialistic theory proceeds is the striking resemblance between the evolution of man as a species, and the evolution of each particular man and woman of the species—man, as a species, evolved from the simplest and lowest organisms of the world's animal life, and the individual man and woman evolved from the temporary foetal organism in which each begins. In man as a species, millions of years were spent in the process of evolution, the material beginning in a simple cell; while, in the individual man, the evolution takes place in the flash of a moment, comparatively, from the temporary foetal organism. In the evolution of man as a species, the lowest stages of organization are endowed with sensitiveness; in the evolution of the individual man, the same is true. In the second stage, in each, infinitely different as they are in the point of time involved, there is the same appearance of simple sense organs, followed by differentiation into specific organs; and this again by a nervous system becoming more and more complex and centralized. After that, conscious perception; and finally the higher mental and moral perceptions, as distinguished from the perceptions that the lower animals have—each individual man and woman being, in the quick progress from the foetal cell to maturity, a reproduction, in all essential respects, of the progressive steps that, through the ages, out of the world's earliest living organisms, evolved the first man.

And having thus fixed the mind, in the study both of the individual and of the species, upon these forms or organisms as they appear in the line of development, each graduating into a higher form, performing higher functions, the Haeckel school arrive at their *deduction*, that the whole process is physiological; that each graduation from lower to higher form was a physiological change only; that in the primitive cell, away back when the world's life began, and in the foetal cell with which each individual form of life now begins, a process began, purely material, that unaided by anything *apart* from the purely material has culminated in the man as he is to-day—the mental and moral man, as well as the material body that the mental and moral man inhabits.

This I say is what the school of Haeckel and other materialists *deduces*. Neither Haeckel nor any other materialist affirms that this conclusion is reached by any other process than that of inference or deduction. Mark these words—"inference," "deduction." They separate what belongs to, and is the product of, experiment and observation by the senses from what belongs to, and is the product of, reasoning *upon* what has been observed or experienced by the senses. No one, for instance, by any reunion of the chemical elements that make up the living organism, has ever yet artificially created life. That would be experiment observable by the senses. It is life that begets life; and in the whole domain of physics, plant and animal, no other way to beget life has been observed, not even the lowest forms of life. All that we know, then, through experimentation or from observation, of the earliest material cell and the life that animates it is, not that they are one and the same thing, but that they are *concomitants*; all that can be said, through experience or observation, of the advanced material organisms and an advanced state of life is, not that they are one and the same thing, but that they, too, are concomitants; and all that can be said of man, from any standpoint of experience or observation, is that, with him, his physical life and his soul-life are concomitants. But whether the concomitancy of the material cell with the life that animates it, and the concomitancy of the physical body of man with the soul that inhabits it, are due to life having its origin in the cell and the soul having its origin in the physical body, or whether life and soul are, in the last analysis, entities separate from the cell and body—the real entities of the universe—utilizing these material

forms as instruments only, as we utilize the telephone transmitter and receiver as instruments only, are, at most, deductions only, not facts scientifically established—*deductions that any school of belief may either accept or reject without rejecting any part of the array of facts that actual observation and experience have established.*

Imagine a human being so circumstanced that he had never known another human being—had never heard music or the human voice—coming suddenly into touch with a telephone, getting from its material organism the first and only note of music or sound of human voice that had ever come to him. Might not such lone man, with apparent reason, draw the deduction that music and voice were functions only of the organism; that, apart from that organism, there was no evidence of such a thing as music, no evidence of such a thing as human voice? And if, on investigating the organism before him closely, he discovered that any misadjustment interfered with or silenced the voices that came from it, and that in proportion as it was loosely put together, or was finely balanced, there issued sounds that were rudimentary only, and sounds that rose to the perfection of the finished voice, would he not have additional apparent reason for the deduction that the voices were but a function of the organism? Indeed, why, in the absence of wider knowledge or a deeper insight, should not this lone man conclude, from the manifest concomitancy of organism and sound, that sound and the organism before him had no separate existence—that one was in truth but the function of the other?

To the extent that we cannot see with our material eyes, or touch with our material fingers, or hear with our material ears, any soul-life apart from the material organism called "body" and "matter," we are in the situation of the lone man suddenly come upon the organism out of which sound and music issue. Is the physical organism, out of which these voices issue, the beginning and the end of the voice and the music? Why should the lone man, who has never heard a voice or music in any other connection, have any absolute scientific basis on which to answer, "No"? Is the physical organism called "the body of man," out of which seem to issue the wonderful something called "soul-life," and "the moral universe," the beginning and the end of soul-life, and the moral universe? Why should we who have never

seen with material eyes, or touched with material fingers, or heard with material ears, the thing called "soul-life," and "the moral universe," except in connection with the material organism, think we had any absolute scientific basis on which to answer, "No"? But, on the other hand, neither in the one case nor in the other is there any absolute scientific basis on which to answer "Yes." In both cases, the conclusion reached, whether it be one or the other, is a process, not of scientific observation, but of inference only, the deduction that the mind draws from given facts. And, that being the case, there is nothing in the present state of science that excludes *as unscientific* those who believe that soul and matter are distinct entities, any more than it excludes as unscientific those who believe that soul is only a function of matter; for from a purely scientific standpoint—the standpoint of materialistic science I mean—the question is still an open one, to be determined, so far as it can be determined, within the limits of man's knowledge, by that intelligent weighing of all the known facts that the mind must make use of in determining any of the debatable questions of this life.

Now, starting just where actual science has brought us, and rising from that into the field of deduction, which inference, that of the materialist, or that of the believer in soul-life as a separate entity from material life, is the most probable one? The array of facts in favor of the materialist is an interesting one. I have no space, further than already employed, to run over these facts. The one indicated—the scientific fact that both in the evolution of the species and of the individual, the development of certain organs connected with life seems to have come in the same order, and to have come concomitantly with the development of life and mind, is the matrix of them all. Not another fact in the whole array produced by the materialist rises to such a degree of convincingness as this. Not another fact in the whole array escapes the inconclusiveness of this. All of them borrow their logic from the inference to be drawn from the concomitancy of soul and matter in process of evolution—that because soul and matter have evolved concomitantly, and in the same physical embodiment, it is to be taken that soul *is* matter—that because the voices issuing from the telephone have, so far as the lone man knows, no origin except in the telephone, it must be taken as established, *as to him*, that the voices are of the telephone.

But let us turn to another array of facts, no less actual than the ones stated, that look exactly in the opposite direction. I shall only give the three that appeal to me most strikingly. The first of these is that there is in this universe such a thing as a Moral Plan. Let me illustrate this in some only of its more obvious relations. We are living in a time, for instance, when, for their material comfort, men have tapped deeply the secrets of nature. Are you seated in your house at midnight, engulfed in light? Are you, without any exertion of your own, carried, swiftly and lightly as the bird flies, over long distances, and by invisible pinions? Are the stars brought near you through the lenses of the telescope? Is sight restored to you through lenses produced at the optician's? Is every comfort from every clime brought every morning to your door? Are the heart and intellect of every age waiting to speak to you from your bookshelves? Do you perceive that in this throbbing, whirling, power-charged universe, every rein is falling into your hands? And do you look upon all these advances as the achievements of men? So they are; but you must add to this, to make the fact complete, that every capability of nature, just as we know it now, uninterruptedly has existed from the beginning, waiting only for the capability lodged in man to discover and possess it. And, add to this again that though the capabilities of nature existed from the beginning, only a hint of them was given to man—the race in its childhood, like the children of men under far-sighted teachers, being left to *work out* the problem; to evolve, by study and experiment, from the summer lightnings playing from cloud to cloud, the masterful electrical forces; to evolve by study and experiment, from the sands of the sea, the lenses that bring worlds together; to evolve, by study and experiment, the facilities that ore and coal and water give us; to evolve, by study and experiment, that most far-reaching of all things, the organization into a cohering whole of the sounds of the human voice that, put on paper, in the characters of the alphabet, have given the heart and intellect of every age a medium through which to speak. True, the law of the survival of the fittest applies to every step in the evolution of this material civilization. But that law does not account for the fact without which evolution would have no ground to begin on, that into nature *were put* these capabilities, and into man *was put* the corresponding capability to event-

ually uncover and utilize them; it does not account for the fact, every day becoming plainer, that into nature nothing has found way that is not a helpful force, present or future, in the economy of mankind. Now, such *adaptation* of capability to capability cannot be chance. Such adaptation is *purpose*. True, its development, step by step, is evolution. But it was not evolution that ordained the adaptation. Behind this composite machine of man and matter, each cog of the one engaging with a corresponding cog of the other, is intention, mind, purpose, moral plan; and all the more clearly is this brought out, and all the more clearly is the object of the purpose made, when we hold before us the fact that, though man and matter were thus adapted to each other from the beginning, it was left to man to *work out* the relationship, in order that man, himself created as we are told in the image of his Creator, might in a lesser degree, through the power working within him, become a creator also—might link his individuality with the Father individuality behind all things. I never contemplate this adaptation of nature, in all her recesses, to the uses of mankind, that I do not acknowledge the *certainity* and the *bountifulness* of the original Intention; and I never dwell on the fact that it required the effort of man to uncover and utilize it, that I do not acknowledge the *benevolence* of the Intention. We are not chance creatures. We are children for whose good all things have been ordered.

I have gone to this material side of moral plan in the universe only because it is the more obvious—is more easily understood. But it is not on that side of life and human history only that a moral plan is discernible. History is only a small part, probably, of the years of the human race. It only goes back to the time when men were far enough advanced to begin to create records. But take the whole of historical mankind—the race in its early tribal relations, living from hand to mouth, cruel as wild beasts, and almost as aimless, rising step by step to what it is now, all the riches of nature at its door, and all the forces of nature plastic in its hands, society governed by law, society taking care of the weak, justice more and more becoming the ideal toward which society strives, the best part of mankind living as if there *were* a God, a moral universe and future responsibility—does not such a history show that civilization and the race have grown up around some life-principle *higher* than its

mere material life; some purpose, some design, some plan for the orderly accomplishment of what has taken place, as distinguished from haphazard and chance? No one will deny that the tree or the blade of grass that, starting from a seed, grows and strengthens and then blossoms and ripens, has grown and strengthened and blossomed and ripened—the same phenomena occurring year after year, along the same lines—in accordance with an underlying life-principle. Is there no design, no plan, no life-principle behind our race's grasp of beauty, of justice, of the ideals that have worked out the greater plan, the very *grasp* of which is the blossoming and the ripening of all that has gone before? And does not this show that into matter, at some time, and from some source higher than matter, there enters moral principle—that concomitant with matter, but above it, there is purpose, plan, the adjustment of capabilities and of events, toward an end wholly different in kind from mere material ends?

The second great fact in the array is the universal *consciousness* of man that, behind this material panorama spread out before the eyes, there is something that gave it being—a something, too, to which each individual life in that being is responsible. I do not mean by this the universality of religion among men; that is a sequence only of the universal consciousness to which I refer. Nor do I mean the almost universal wish among men that there should be a future life; that, too, is only a sequence—along with religious phenomena, one of the things that manifest themselves because underneath, in the universal consciousness, there lies the insight, that in some way *sees* that mind is different from matter, and that behind matter is something, not itself matter, out of which mind and soul have emerged, and to which they are responsible.

Does that underlying consciousness mislead us? It has run through human nature of every race, and through all time. Is it a mere phantasm, the by-play of hope and the imagination? Let us test the inquiry by what the same kind of underlying consciousness means in those things with which we daily come in touch.

I will illustrate out of my own experience. Through almost sixteen years now, I have been hearing, from one end of the year to the other, judicial causes of almost every kind—causes that involve human emotions; causes that, escaping the field of emotions,

involve the law as the mere evolutionary means of the social safety and progress of mankind; and causes that, escaping both these, involve the laws of nature, mechanics, electricity and the like. Many of these causes have in their presentation been greatly clarified—many almost hopelessly jumbled; but, in every instance, no matter what the nature of the cause, or what the helpfulness of the presentation, the *first sight caught* of the right solution has been something in the nature of intuition or feeling, rather than conscious perception—the intuition, *underneath* reasoning, that points the way, leaving it to conscious reasoning to assure one that the way thus pointed out is indeed the right way. And what is this intuition, this feeling, this universal subconsciousness that rules every one, in every relation of life, but the sensitive plate through which environment imprints its meaning—the so-called “reasoning faculties” being the room only in which the plates are developed and put into order. And if this be true of the daily problems presented by our immediate environment, why is it not true also of the eternal problem presented by the greater environment, the greater problem presented by the question, Whence came we? and Whither are we going? Is not the difference of environment and question simply a difference in the magnitude and difficulty of the work of developing that which this latent consciousness holds? In the one case, as in the other, is not the latent consciousness *insight*—the thing that the soul *sees* in advance of reason catching up to classify and explain? And, as such, is it not just as much a fact in the universe of truth as any other established fact?

The third fact in my array is the fact that there is Unity in the world of Thought and Feeling, as well as in Nature. Let me illustrate again by something personal. I was once in a region where there were many springs, some on the mountainside, some in the valley, some pouring out great streams, some that were mere threads; but, whether large or small, whether on the mountainside or in the valley, they all rose and fell in unison, all had a common pulsation like the heaving and falling of a single bosom. To any student of past history or observer of contemporaneous events, the manifestations of mind, heart and conscience that characterize the movements of men disclose a like unity. True, what we call “exact knowledge” usually comes slowly, and from widely scattered sources. But not so with the

really great convictions and impulses of the world. These seem to burst forth everywhere at once, as the great fountain at Versailles bursts forth, every aperture, big or little, whether at the pinnacle or whether obscure, responding at once and according to its capacity. Indeed, to those who observe closely, and who have read discriminately, there is no fact more fully proven than that, behind thought and feeling, the world over, there is a common source, some central mind, some central heart, from which each individual mind, each individual heart, receives its pulsations.

Now, as a *premise for deduction*, each of these facts is just as much a scientific fact, and just as scientifically determinable, as the facts upon which, as premises, the school of materialists base their deductions; and upon them we can build deductions that have the same kind of scientific warrant that any mere deduction is entitled to claim. Indeed, the only respect in which the honest materialist differs from the believing world, is that the horizon of the materialist is a restricted horizon only; stops long before the limits of known facts are reached; and excludes everything, however clearly seen by the mind, that the material hand does not touch. All that the believing world asks of science and philosophy—and in so asking stands squarely on scientific ground—is that, before any deductions are finally accepted as conclusive, the horizon upon which they are predicated be enlarged to include every known fact.

And within this restricted horizon of the materialist—to sum it all up—what have we? A deduction that spirit and body are one, founded wholly on the premise that life, mind, heart and conscience have developed *concomitantly* with that part of matter that we find in the physical body—a deduction no more valid than the deduction of the lone man who had come across the telephone, that the voice and the telephone were one, because *to him* they were concomitant.

Within the larger horizon of the believer, what have we? Nature in all its apparent diversity disclosing plan; the Moral World disclosing plan; Nature stored from the beginning with forces—from the first fire struck by flint to the last wireless message sent across the seas—that would have been forever superfluous in the absence of man; the Moral World developing its ascending forces—beauty, charity, justice—that might as easily

have had their places taken by the descending forces had not an ascending mankind been in the centre of the plan. Nature yielding of its store only in response to man's thought and endeavor; in that way developing, as only exercise could develop, those fibres in the human race that have made material civilization possible; the Moral World unfolding its store only in response to the religious perceptions and better instincts of mankind; in that way developing in men, themselves, a part at least of the power that has lifted up mankind. Man the point toward which everything in Nature is directed; man the point upon which everything in the Moral World is centred.

And through it all, in the consciousness of mankind, as the ever-recurring note that forms the key to the composition, the persistent insight that, behind all this, there is an Intelligence, and a Love, that only the acceptance of man as the child of God can account for. So all we have to do is to recognize these voices as facts within the realm of Science, and like the lone man with the telephone, who eventually discovers that what he supposed was a part of the instrument is really behind and apart from the instrument, we will begin to see that *behind* the material body is something apart from the material body—something that, while speaking *through* the body as the instrument now at hand, is infinitely above the material body—Soul, not body, the real entity of the universe.

I have excluded from this paper every consideration based on Revelation or Faith. I have dealt with the subject as if there were no Inspired Word—as if the world knew nothing of a Son of Man who at the same time was a Son of God. But I do not wish it to be understood that this Jesus of Nazareth is not to me a sufficient foundation on which to rest, in abiding security, my belief in the world to come. When I turn over in thought the words some great man uttered to his contemporaries—a Cromwell, a Washington or a Lincoln—and then reflect what those words and that man subsequently accomplished, a new belief attaches to their truth and wisdom. And so it is also when I turn over in my mind the word given to us by this Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of parents who, but for Him, would have lived and died a mere carpenter and his wife. He never set foot outside a province of the Roman Empire that, in its day, was as little taken notice of, by the rest of the world, as is one of

the small islands of the Philippine Archipelago. And He passed out of this life unmentioned in any writing of His time, for the mention by Josephus is probably an interpolation. But His Life and His Word "have divided the world into two"; everything that has come after Him is His; everything that shall come after us increasingly His. More than all the other forces of civilization, more than the combined lives of the world's great men, His Life and His Word have remade the world. Why should not I, turning back as I often do, with a new faith to the words of the world's great men who have done great things, turn back to the Life and the Words of Him, who not only has done great things, but has *remade* the world, with an abiding faith in their inspired truth?

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